



# Department of Justice

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## **CONVICTED FELON WHO SHOT BLACK BEAR IN PUTNAM COUNTY SENTENCED TO FIFTEEN YEARS**

Jacksonville, Florida - U.S. District Judge Henry Lee Adams, Jr., today sentenced Ralph Paul, an armed career criminal, to fifteen years' imprisonment for shooting and killing a tagged black bear in Putnam County, Florida.

Ralph Paul entered a plea of guilty on March 30, 2007 to a charge of being a felon in possession of a Marlin, .22 caliber rifle.

According to court documents, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation officers were conducting an investigation surrounding the shooting of a tagged black bear in Putnam County. During the course of the investigation, Ralph Paul was identified as a subject in the bear shooting. Subsequent investigation revealed that Mr. Paul had multiple prior felony convictions, and was consequently prohibited from possessing a firearm. Despite this prohibition, Mr. Paul attempted to "pawn" three firearms to his employer.

The case was investigated by the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, Ocala, Florida and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Frank Talbot.

This is another case prosecuted as a part of the Department of Justice program "Project Safe Neighborhoods" - a nationwide gun violence reduction initiative with strong support from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. United States

Attorney Robert E. O'Neill is coordinating the effort here in the Middle District of Florida with federal, state and local law enforcement officials. The objective is to reduce violence crime by locating and seizing unlawfully possessed guns and then swiftly prosecuting the offenders using both federal and state gun laws.